



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

BY WILLIAM F. OGBURN

The University of Washington

The phrase, "the economic interpretation of history," is a condensation in a single phrase of a complex series of ideas. The complexity of the subject, the emotional setting of the material, and the descriptive inadequacy of the phrase, have led to a good deal of misunderstanding. The problem is, therefore, certainly first of all one of analysis. However, this paper does not attempt a general analysis, although the many-sidedness of the subject is realized. The purpose here is only to develop the psychological basis of one phase of the subject.

More specifically, the thesis is that the development of abnormal psychology within the past decade or so has developed a psychological foundation for the doctrine, hitherto lacking. In the first half of the paper this psychological foundation will be presented by setting forth certain mental mechanisms which recent researches in the field of abnormal psychology have developed. It will then be argued that these newly discovered mental mechanisms are the ones which account for the collective behaviour which we study under the title, "the economic interpretation of history." The latter half of the paper will consider certain illustrations of the economic interpretation of history, and will show how these same mental mechanisms operate in the collective behaviour of history, as well as in individual behaviour. And the claim will be made that, as a working hypothesis, the economic interpretation of history has been very greatly strengthened by these researches.

Earlier psychology, dating from Darwin and Spencer, not only did not provide such a psychological basis, but, indeed, furnished a distinct basis of criticism, which seemed to weaken the hypothesis. This psychology stressed the multiplicity and variety of the instincts. These instincts are usually listed in the hundreds. And the point of application to the economic interpretation theory was this. If man has these many and various instincts, why single out one, the desire for food, and build a whole interpretation of history on one alone? In other words, the economists were accused of using "bad psychology" in neglecting the other instincts. But one obvious defect of the criticism is the attempt to identify

the economic motive with the desire for food, or any one single instinct. For the economic motive, at least in modern times, is the desire for money or what money will buy, and money will buy not only material good, but satisfaction for nearly every instinct.

The older psychology also stressed the separateness of the instincts. Exposed to a certain stimulus, our reaction would be along the paths of one instinct; exposed to another stimulus, reaction would follow another instinct. And the instincts were sometimes thought of as being all of the same plane. These ideas, more or less carelessly applied, seemed to strengthen the criticism which considered the economic motive as simply one of many separate instincts. While the relations of the instincts one to another are by no means clear as yet, nevertheless the recent achievements in physiological psychology, particularly in this country in the work of Cannon and Crile, as well as in abnormal psychology, point distinctly in the direction of a considerable interrelation and inter-dependence of the instincts. These relationships are such as to weaken the older concept of their being separate and on the same plane. In other words, it would now seem more permissible to think of the economic motive as harnessing in its train, at various times, quite a variety and number of the instincts.

But it is not along these lines of application that the major purpose of this paper is concerned. The major purpose is to set forth certain of the newly discovered mechanisms, the unconscious, the censor displacement, projection, compensation, the use of symbols and rationalization, which have been developed by Freud, Jung, Ferenczi, Adler, Abraham, Pfister, Blueyer, Jones, Brill, Frink and others, and to show how the instincts function through them, and how these mechanisms offer an explanation of the social behaviour, called the economic motivation. In so brief a paper it will not be possible to define these concepts very fully, however desirable it may seem in dealing with such strange concepts and discoveries. I shall define the concepts in a few words and then give a few illustrations, not claiming in any case that the proof is developed in the paper. To develop a proof of a particular illustration often requires many pages or even a book. In the extensive literature are many cases of scientific treatment and proof. Some of my audience may not be familiar with the general background and material, and to these I will say that my experience in such events has been that some of the illustrations inevitably have seemed un-

convincing, but a further reading of the literature usually makes them appear convincing. It may also be that those who have been accustomed to dealing with subjects of such high dignity as state craft, trade relations of nations, or general economic conditions, will find that illustrations concerning sex and the behaviour of nervous women seem quite trivial. In anticipation, it may seem desirable to state that it is quite necessary to draw illustrations from these subjects, because such has been the field of the research which has developed them. And as to their triviality, such an attitude is unwarranted, just as much so as to consider monographs on the earthworm or the amoeba as being trivial. These psychologists are engaged in the important task of working out cures for insanity and in curing cases of nervousness, which are increasing at such a rapid rate in our modern life. They are concerned with the very real problem of lessening human misery and bringing happiness, and bid fair to do it just as truly as will be done by the increase of material possessions or the extension of political liberty. Indeed, the discoveries of Freud have many times been claimed to be as significant as the discovery of the theory of evolution by Darwin and Wallace.

While many of the illustrations are from abnormal personalities, it is very important to remember that the psychologically insane are considered to differ from the normal only in degree, and that therefore the study of insanity is analogous to the use of the microscope in the laboratory.

The unconscious.—A great many of our desires are unconscious. They function in such a manner that we are unconscious of their real nature. Many of these desires cannot be brought to consciousness without the aid and assistance of someone else. Some desires, though forgotten, do not die, but live on in an unconscious state. A vast amount of human behaviour is occasioned by unconscious motives. In some cases a series of repressed desires integrate into a sort of subconscious personality.

That unconscious desires may exist, is seen in cases of double or multiple personality, of the "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" type. The case of the Reverend Ansel Bourse, cited by Hart,¹ and Janet's² Irène are cases in point, as are the cases studied by Prince.³ Dream analysis, as developed by Freud, furnishes abun-

¹ Bernard Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity* (1912) p. 49.

² Pierre Janet, *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (1907), p. 29.

³ Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of Personality* (1906), and *The Unconscious* (1914).

dant evidence of the unconscious, as most of the dream material comes from the unconscious state. Another illustration, mentioned by Frink,⁴ is that of a man who was exceptionally violent in railing against all manifestations of authority. The exceptional nature of his reaction was shown upon analysis to be due to a repressed feeling against a very dominating and authoritative parent; the repressed feeling, though long forgotten, had lived on in the unconscious since early childhood, and manifested itself in an exceptional rebellion against various forms of authority. The love of a woman for a pet lap dog is often the manifestation of a repressed, and, perhaps, unconscious, desire for children. These illustrations all bear evidence of a body of desires in the unconscious state. The fact that so many of our desires come from the unconscious, has been the occasion of comparing the process of their functioning to that of a magnet placed under a paper, upon which are placed iron tacks. The tacks move when the magnet is moved, but the magnet, the force which causes the tacks to move, is not visible.

Repression.—Many of the desires of the unconscious are there because they are *repressed* from the field of consciousness. They are repressed because of mental conflicts. In a particular case there is a conflict between perhaps two sets of desires, one of which may be antisocial, and the other may be highly in accord with the best moral tradition. This mental conflict causes pain and perhaps a loss of mental energy. Such a state of affairs is intolerable to the personality, and the mind acts usually according to what is called the pleasure principle, that is, it must find its pleasure in relief. The result will probably be that the antisocial desire will be repressed into the unconscious, in which it continues to live, though forgotten. Much forgetting is therefore purposeful. The particular repressing agency is sometimes called the “censor” or “censure.” Thus, professional jealousy is sometimes so successfully repressed that one does not admit to himself its existence. Similarly, humiliating experiences, which are painful to remember, are forgotten, as has been often noted in unsuccessful love affairs which involve loss to one’s hopes and ambitions, or one’s self-respect. In these cases, if there was not repression and forgetting, the persons would suffer greatly from the pain of the mental conflict. The case of Irène, previously referred to, although of a pathological nature, shows very clearly the phenome-

⁴ H. W. Frink, *Morbid Fears and Compulsions* (1918), p. 149.

non of repression. This young woman nursed, during a long illness, her mother, to whom she was exceptionally devoted, and with whom her future was quite bound up. The mother finally died, under very trying and impressive circumstances. But for days at a time afterward the daughter seemed to be utterly unaware that her mother was dead. Then suddenly, perhaps during a conversation with friends, she would become transformed as it were, and reenact with consummate histrionic skill the scene at her mother's death bed, living it over in minute detail, all during which she would be oblivious to her surroundings. She would not hear, for instance, remarks addressed to her. In this case the thought of her mother's being dead was so unbearable that she repressed the whole complex from her mind, and most successfully, but the repression was not perfect, and suddenly the repressed material would come to consciousness and result in reenacting the deathbed scenes. Where conflicts are acute and intolerable, and the repression inadequate, the mind cannot stand the strain and insanity results. This analysis of the cause of psychological insanity is described by Jung,⁵ in his analysis of a maniacal type, the archaeologist from the University of B——. Repressions of a minor scale go on through our daily life. Periods of very great repression occur in late childhood. Such desires as sex, pugnacity, or selfishness are often repressed; the repressing agency is usually the desires that accord with popular moral sanction.

The disguised activity of unconscious desires.—These repressed unconscious desires, though forgotten, do not die, but live on, and they endeavor to escape the repression. Thus, the force which repressed them in the first instance must continually keep watch lest these repressed desires break out into consciousness and express themselves. The "censor" acts, therefore, as if continually on guard. This "censorship" is not always successful, for many of the desires escape. This they do by disguising themselves, very much as a Mexican revolutionist who wants to buy ammunition may cross the border, disguised as a peasant working woman. The effectiveness of the disguises of repressed instincts explains why psychologists were not fully aware of them until the researches of the psycho-analysist appeared, and the illustrations which authors cite of these disguised desires seem so unsound, on first impression, for the very reason that the disguise is effective. These disguises which our motives assume are the central feature

⁵ C. G. Jung, "Der Inhalt der Psychose" (1908).

of this paper, because of the thesis that the economic motives of history are disguised. A number of such disguises, therefore, will be presented in detail, to show their astounding ingenuity, their very great prevalence, and the ease and skill with which the human mind can perform these remarkable feats.

Displacement.—A repressed desire may escape the censor by displacing the true objective of the desire by a substitution. Thus Freud tells of a patient who was irresistibly compelled to examine the number of every bank note that came under her observation. She knew the act to be foolish, yet she could not help doing it, and suffered acutely because of this compulsion. Upon analysis it was found that she had suffered from an unrequited love affair. The conflict and pain which arose caused her to banish the painful chapter from her life, and she forgot. The repression was successful, but the compulsion neurosis appeared. Further analysis showed that a bank note played a significant part in this love chapter. So that although she repressed the desire, it was never dead, and made a partial escape through a displacement on to the bank note. This account and explanation appear very strange. Yet, that such explanations are true accounts, seems to be indicated by the fact that cases are cured after an unmasking of the disguise. A number of such strange and morbid compulsions have been similarly analyzed. A more ordinary illustration from normal behaviours, is that of affectation in dress or gait. Much affectation in dress is unconscious, as to the motive or particular desire expressed. One's egotism thus conceals itself in order to get by the censor, through a displacement upon the development of a peculiar mannerism. The term displacement is applied usually to displacement of words or word-ideas, chiefly in connection with dream analysis and such mental behaviour as wit, yet the term is being more widely used to cover a displacement on to another kind of activity in such a manner as to conceal the true motive. Thus, Frink⁶ claims a child with a strong exhibitionist tendency may in later life make an actor on the stage. The exhibitionist tendency, being incompatible with current morals, is repressed in late childhood, and later finds an outlet through a displacement on histrionic activities. Similarly, Freud advances the idea, in his brilliant study of Leonardo da Vinci, that Leonardo's great scientific interest was a sublimated sexual curiosity of childhood. Some of the disguises here called displacement are truly marvelous, and certainly at first hardly believable.

⁶ Frink, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

Symbolism.—The use of symbols as a disguise is a type of displacement, yet so prevalent as to deserve especial mention. How an emotion will in great strength become concentrated upon a symbol as an objective, is readily seen in love keepsakes, or in a national emblem, like a flag. There is, of course, in these two illustrations, little of a disguise of the emotion, except that in any moment of response to a symbol, the great, full knowledge of the emotion cannot, of course, be in consciousness. Many symbols, however, are complete disguises. Thus clinical analyses have demonstrated the almost universal prevalence of certain sex symbols, such as the snake, the sword, and horseback riding. I cannot here explain how these are sex symbols, but I only wish to state that all students of psycho-analysis agree that these are sexual disguises.

Projection.—Quite a different, though very important, type of concealment, is known as projection. In this case a person conceals a desire by projecting it on to others. To quote Hart, in his *Psychology of Insanity*: "Thus the parvenu, who is secretly conscious of his own social deficiencies, talks much of 'bounders' and 'outsiders' whom he observes around him, while the one thing which the muddle-headed man cannot tolerate is a lack of clear thinking in other people." An illustration from Frink's *Morbid Fears and Compulsions*⁷ is that of an attractive young widow, who wished to move from a small town, claiming to be annoyed by the gossip that she was a "designing widow." There was really no substantial evidence of gossip, but upon analysis it was shown that unconsciously she did wish to remarry, but would not so soon admit the desire to consciousness, and the repressed wish expressed itself as a projection on to others. The reason of her peculiar disguise was this: the desire to remarry would have produced a conflict with her social code. To permit this secret wish conscious outlet would have resulted in abuse of herself, because of the social code. To spare herself this pain of conflict, she projected the desire on to the small town populace, where she could rebuke it, and at the same time spare herself the pain of her own mental conflict. Much of the phenomena of paranoia and insanity, involving delusions of persecution, have this specific etiology.

Compensation.—The analysis of the disguise known as compensation has been developed particularly by Adler in his book,

⁷ Frink, p. 157.

The Neurotic Constitution. The idea is that a defect or weakness is compensated for by the development of another organ or trait, thus a leaky heart valve is partly compensated for by the strengthening of the heart muscle. It is observed that our emotions seem to occur in pairs, love and hate, fear and anger, humility and arrogance. An unusual desire of one of these pairs may be obscured by an exaggeration of the opposite, a sort of imaginary compensation for its absence. Thus we are sometimes unusually polite and courteous to persons we do not like, and our real motive is disguised. The absence of a friendly feeling will be compensated for by an exaggeration of courtesy. A very common form of compensation frequently seen in clinics among neurotics is an exaggerated concern for the health of a particular person, which serves to cover up a secret and, perhaps, unconscious wish of a contrary nature. A very good man, professing a religion of humility, will sometimes compensate for a repressed ego by a developed intolerance and arrogance in the name of goodness.

Rationalization.—Perhaps the most widely used disguise among normal persons is that of giving a fictitious, but plausible, explanation for conduct, instead of giving the true reason or motive, a device called rationalization. It is as though we do what we want to do, and afterward give a reason that is plausible to the opinions of others, as well as to the censor. And it is surprising how often we are ignorant of the true motive. Thus a man claimed to have voted for President Wilson because of the President's exceptional ability, but analysis showed the real reason to be the fact that the man was really unconsciously cowardly, and felt that Wilson had kept us out of war. A man will go fishing on Sunday because he wants to, but gives as his reason the fact that it is good for his health. Perhaps the most ingenious of all rationalizations are those of sufferers from persecutory delusions. I knew a tailor once, who thought enemies were going to do him harm. A bystander waiting in front of his shop was planning to burn his shop. A very generous customer would be spying. It was impossible to convince such a person by argument. The real reason of his fear was inward and unknown to him, and not the behaviour of the bystander or the customer. Rationalizations are as prevalent, though on a different scale, among normal persons as among paranoiacs. There are other disguises, such as *transference*, *identification*, and various distortion devices; but as they are seldom, if ever, found in disguising the economic motives of

history, I shall not illustrate them. It is hoped that the foregoing list of mental mechanisms will have shown the really remarkable and astounding feats which the mind will perform to disguise motives, and that the presentation will give some hint of their great prevalence in human behaviour. It is the scientific determination of these various disguises which is the great contribution of psycho-analysis for the theory of the economic motivation of history. For if the human mind so lavishly disguises our various motives, the theory that economic motives of history are disguised does not appear so incredible. Economists have claimed that sugar partly caused the Spanish American war, and Boudin⁸ has claimed the selling of textiles made the peace epoch of the Gladstone era, while the selling of iron brought the warlike spirit of the present day. Whether these particular illustrations be true or not, they may not seem so incredible when we recall that a love motive finds an outlet in an obsession to examine the numbers on bank notes, and that a childish sexual curiosity finds an outlet in scientific research.

Turning now to the analysis of the economic side of the paper, it is claimed that the economic causes of history are in large part unrecognized, which means that they are at least partially disguised. Before considering the particular disguises affected, it is desirable to analyze what the economic motives are and why they are disguised. The economic motive is essentially selfish. Selfishness of course finds many other modes of expression than the economic. The analysis of this paper does not imply, however, that all economic motives are selfish, nor that every selfish economic motive is against the common welfare. Nor does the validity of the thesis depend on what particular percentages of our economic motives are selfish. That we tend to repress the selfish motive is readily seen when we observe that we are loath to admit a selfish motive but are proud to display an altruistic or a righteous one. The reason for this difference in attitude between so-called altruistic and selfish motives arises from the fact that a certain amount of subordination of self must be made for the common good. There seems to be thus a conflict between immediate selfish interests and the common welfare. The selfish tendencies are kept in bounds by what Ross and Giddings call social control, by what Trotter calls the herd instinct, and by what Sumner calls the mores. We can all see that if each

⁸ Louis B. Boudin, *Socialism and the War*, 1916.

individual pursued self-centeredly and short-sightedly his own selfish impulses, group survival would be impossible. As to how and why this is so, we owe much to the researches of social psychology within the past decade. In society, therefore, there is a conflict between collective selfishness and group welfare. This social control or mores or gregarious instinct acts as a sort of censor, and represses a good many of selfish tendencies, and elicits praise for altruistic ones. Motives of collective selfishness are in a way repressed into the unconscious state. That is, we do not openly admit them, and the censorship is so great at times that we actually forget them. But because we refuse to recognize them or forget them is not proof that they may not exist. Certainly some of them live on and function in collective movements through disguises. In other words, the same mechanisms of conflict, censor, and disguise operate in the repression and escape of collective selfishness as were discovered by psycho-analysis to be so prevalent in sexual behaviour. The above reasoning sounds dangerously like reasoning by analogy, and suggests some of those ill-fated attempts of earlier days to apply the mechanism of physics to sociology. But I do not think that this is reasoning by analogy. In fact, I am attempting to show how two kinds of phenomena are based upon the same fundamental psychological mechanism.

It should also be noted here that there is nothing mystical in the working of these mechanisms collectively. No special entity, as the social mind, with special mental laws is implied. The way these mechanisms of individual persons work out collectively is somewhat as follows. In a particular population of say a million, there will perhaps be only several thousand who are selfishly and economically interested in a movement. These thousands being in positions of influence will be able perhaps to prepare "copy," so to speak, for the population, and large numbers who are not acutely affected one way or another accept the prepared opinions. Trotter⁹ has shown that there is very much more accepting of prepared opinions by us than the most sophisticated of us suspect. And of these thousands who are economically interested, perhaps only a small percentage, say 10 or 20 per cent, or less, are clearly conscious of the true nature of their selfish desires. Perhaps 80 or 90 per cent or more, depending of course on the particular occasion or the nature of the movement, will

⁹ W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (1917).

partially or completely disguise the economic motive by some of the processes outlined. These disguised motives will be much more readily accepted by hundreds of thousands of citizens not acutely affected. And thus we have the collective phenomena occasioned by the operation of individual mechanism.

Perhaps some may wonder how it is that in individual behaviour it is most conspicuously the sex instinct that is disguised, yet in collective behaviour the same mechanism appears to disguise chiefly the economic motive. This should not seem puzzling when it is observed that in history there is little group association for sex purposes, while there is a very great deal of such association for economic gains.

Having made this analysis and explanation, it is well to consider some illustrations. Consider the great spread of the "safety-first" movement. This movement is thought of almost entirely in its altruistic phases. It appears as a movement for group welfare. Yet there is an economic motive underlying it, for those who pay for accidents gain financially by the spread of the movement. And those who gain are in modern industrial society a very powerful group. In this illustration it is possible to advance the hypothesis that a selfish motive of the unconscious is expressing itself through the disguise of altruistic motives. Certainly the selfish motive is unconscious, that is, unknown to large groups of people. The popular conception of the motives is altruistic. That the selfish motive is functioning in altruistic clothing, is made probable by the fact that the safety-first movement arose shortly after the great wave of workmen's compensation acts, which culminated in their adoption by some three quarters of our states in a very brief time; and it did not arise prior to this time, although social workers had been pointing out the tragedy of some five hundred thousand or a million accidents a year for some time. From this illustration it will probably be quite clear that at least some selfish economic motives disguise themselves to escape the censor of social disapproval. We shall next consider some particular mental mechanisms by which these disguises are affected.

Displacement.—That some emotions of groups of people, as well as of individuals, are displaced in their objectives, has been shown by Max Eastman,¹⁰ who has analyzed the idea of the scapegoat so prevalent among primitive peoples. He also points out that the I. W. W. have been made the scapegoat of the modern

¹⁰ Max Eastman, *The New Review*, Aug., 1914.

world. In this illustration the emotion of national anger has been displaced. That economic motives may be displaced is seen from an illustration furnished by Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, a letter from Emanuel Downing to John Winthrop in 1645. "A warr with the Narragansett is verie considerable to this plantation ffor I doubt whither yt be not synne in us hauing power in our hands, to suffer them to maynteyne the worship of the devill which their paw wawes often doe; 2 lie, if upon a just warre the Lord should deliver them into our hands, wee might easily haue men, women and children enough to exchange for Moores, which will be more gaynfull pilladge for us than we conceive, for I doenot see how wee can thrive untill we get a stock of slaves." It is true that Emanuel Downing did not in this letter disguise his economic motive very well, but very probably in a good many religious wars the economic movement has been obscured. Thus various modern historians have uncovered the economic factors in the crusades of which people had been largely unconscious. Engels¹¹ and Bernstein¹² have similarly pointed out the economic nature of the Reformation. Perhaps in these cases there was a certain amount of disguise of economic factors by displacement on to religious objectives.

Symbolism.—The displacement of the economic motive on to symbols deserves special notice. Such symbols are usually of a highly ethical nature. Thus the statute of liberty in New York harbor is a symbol, as indeed are the terms liberty and freedom, which furnish in connection with immigration at least in some cases disguised outlets to economic motives. During the past century the United States has prospered materially because of immigration. It has been called "a golden stream," because the need for labor and development was so great that the bundle of scanty clothing on the back of the immigrant was truly a bag of gold. But it will be interesting to see whether these altruistic symbols in connection with immigration will be as popular in the coming years when the country will have become more thickly populated. A careful reading of American colonial history will show that the terms freedom, independence, liberty, for which the Revolutionary War was fought had a surprisingly large number of specific economic determinants.¹³ The Constitution of the

¹¹ F. Engels, *Der deutsche Bauern Krieg*.

¹² Ed. Bernstein, *Die Geschichte der Socialismus in Einzeldarstellungen*.

¹³ A. M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (1917).

United States is a symbol for the bulwark of our conservatives; and it is very probable that in cases where economic motives are responsible for the reverence for this symbol, they will be so quite unconsciously.

Projection.—A selfish movement may disguise its own selfishness by projecting it upon opponents. We do not see the beam in our own eye for looking at the mote in our neighbor's eye. Revolutionary radicals with the tremendous conception of taking the whole means of production, however praiseworthy their selfishness may or may not be, see chiefly the colossal crime of selfishness of the capitalists. Employers who are so selfish as not to provide the most elemental sanitation for good shop conditions are usually the ones who talk most of the selfishness of the trade-union. In many economic conflicts as between parties and countries, the selfishness of one contestant is obscured by emphasizing the selfishness of the opponent.

Compensation.—In economic movements of considerable selfishness in which no feeling of altruism seems to exist, this absence is sometimes compensated for by its exaggeration in an imaginary way. Thus throughout recent history the economic exploitation of primitive peoples has been compensated for by the fact that they were being brought the blessings of civilization. Also in some conflicts, the more ruthless the struggle the holier the cause.

Rationalization.—By far the most prevalent device, it seems to me, employed in disguising the economic motives of history is rationalization. This term is used, it is recalled, when a fictitious but plausible reason is given in the place of the real one. A somewhat humorous illustration is taken from Calhoun's *A Social History of the American Family*. Nearly a century ago a Mr. Gloyd of South Carolina made the following plea for the introduction of cotton mills: "Here will be found a never-failing asylum for the friendless orphans and the bereft widows, the distribution of labor and the improvements in machinery happily combining to call into profitable employment the tender services of those who have just sprung from the cradle as well as those who are tottering to the grave, thus training up the little innocents to early and wholesome habits of honest industry and smoothing the wrinkled front of decrepitude with the smiles of competency of protection." Other illustrations are the following. In the profit-sharing schemes of recent years the selfish motives of employers were rationalized, as has been pretty well shown in a number of studies.

Similarly an element of rationalization is found in the adoption of welfare work in connection with industrial establishments, and in the imperialists' argument the true motives are sometimes rationalized. These illustrations might be multiplied in great number, but enough have been cited to indicate the possible rôle of rationalization in social movements.

This concludes the presentation of the specific disguises of the economic motives, but I wish to recur to the phenomenon of repression for the purpose of showing how in the writing of history the economic factors tend to be neglected or omitted. It has been previously shown that repression operates in such a manner as to cause us to forget what it is very unpleasant to remember. Apply this mechanism, so clearly applicable to individual behaviour, to the writing of history. History becomes at once distorted because we choose to omit, that is, to forget as a social group, certain unpleasant events of history. The events we choose to remember are those in accord with the particular mores we encourage, and we tend to forget those opposed. It is the selfish economic events we wish to forget and the ethical we wish to remember. And, if a selfish event is so prominent it cannot be readily forgotten, we translate it, if possible, into ethical terms and remember them. In short, history is written by forgetting and rationalizing. For instance, the present generation recalls the Civil War as a war to free the slaves, a laudable ethical endeavor. Yet the freeing of slaves plays a very small part in the literature of the events preceding the war. There is a good deal of evidence to show that Lincoln freed the slaves as a war measure and with little previous moral planning, while the events preceding the war do show what many of us forget, the selfish conflict of two different economic systems. The application of this method of mental functioning is most important for our problem in accounting for some of the neglect of the economic factors in histories and helps to show why it is that when we look back over the panorama of history we see so much of religion, ethics, great men, politics, and so little of the economic factors.

In conclusion, it is well to state that the illustrations of the disguises of economic motives are of course not claimed as proofs. To prove the operation of a mechanism in a particular illustration would take a large number of pages or even chapters. The illustrations show what the proof is expected to be. There are, however, some special studies in economic history which go far

toward establishing scientifically these disguises. Particularly valuable, it is thought, have been the studies of Marx, Engels, Rogers, Lamprecht, Loria, Gabriola, Seligman, Patten, Beard. There is of course quite an extensive bibliography of the younger economists and historians who have shown the importance of the economic factor. Furthermore, it seems hardly necessary to state that it is not claimed in this paper that every collective movement is economically determined. There are social movements in which the economic motives play a minor and noncausative rôle, as, for instance, the social-hygiene movement and certain phases of educational progress and various others. It is particularly desired not to leave the impression that the functioning of these mechanisms can be reduced to a simple formula which can be applied in every case. At one particular stage of cultural development a certain movement will be rationalized, while at another stage a similar movement will not be rationalized. Some individuals in the same social movement will not disguise their selfish desire and others will. And of those who disguise their motives some will employ a particular mechanism and others will employ a different one. These variations are due to cultural antecedents and varying individual experiences. Past writing and criticism have shown the folly of over-simplifying the problem.

What is claimed is that recent psychological development has, if not discovered, at least charted fairly clearly and fully certain hitherto only casually observed mental mechanisms; and, what is most important, has shown how common is their use to all of us. And it is furthermore claimed that the nature and use of these mechanisms is such that they are used in disguising some economic motives of history and that there is some evidence to sustain this claim. The economic-interpretation-of-history school is thereby strengthened by new developments in psychology, as is also general economic theory. Specific proof of the operation of a particular mechanism in a particular social phenomenon depends of course upon a careful analysis and a detailed marshalling of evidence. And of course this branch of economics will be greatly benefited by many such studies whatever their conclusions may show. While awaiting these this paper claims that recent developments of psychology are such as to bestow considerable confidence in this hypothesis as a good working instrument.